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## Adoption in Spotlight

By Dean Stout  
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As a Superior Court Judge, I look forward to presiding over adoption proceedings. Adoption cases are one of the few types of matters coming before the Court which evoke joy and celebration on the part of everyone in the courtroom. During adoption hearings, the use of cameras in the courtroom is not only allowed but encouraged. Adoption hearings are so important that they are given priority and special settings on the Court's calendar.

Finalizing an adoption is a very special moment for the family. The occasion is intensely personal. The Court strives to conduct adoption proceedings in a dignified manner, so to emphasize and respect the importance of the new legal relationship, yet casual enough to allow for the expression of emotions that are often overwhelming. The joyous courtroom experience is not possible however, without the commitment of adoptive parents.

To the end of providing much needed permanency for children, the Court recognizes the need and importance of recruiting suitable adoptive parents. The need for adoptive parents is especially critical for children who are older; siblings who want to be adopted together; children from minority cultures; and, children who are physically or mentally challenged.

According to the Judicial Council of California, each year in California, there are more than 491,000 reports of child abuse and neglect and more than 27,000 children enter foster care. Currently, almost 96,000 children are living apart from their families in out-of-home care. Of these children, 34 percent do not leave the foster care system within four years. Many times children are frequently moved from one foster home or placement to another. Recognizing the need for permanency, the California Judicial Council and California Legislature have declared November to be Court Adoption and Permanency Planning Month.

By agreement, adoption services in Inyo County are provided by Kern County Department of Human Services-Adoptions in Bakersfield, California. Should you be interested in exploring the possibility of becoming an adoptive parent, please telephone Ms. Marsha Allen at Kern County Adoptions, telephone (661) 868-8919. Inyo County Child Protective Services makes available for viewing a thirteen minute video for prospective adoptive parents. To borrow the video or obtain more information on becoming an adoptive parent or foster care provider, please contact Ms. Kathy Rose at Inyo County Child Protective Services by calling 872-1727. Thank you for your consideration.